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**ABSTRACT OF**  
**WAR TERMINATION:**  
**DO PLANNING PRINCIPLES CHANGE WITH THE NATURE OF THE WAR?**

Despite the volumes of research and literature on the subject, belligerents mismanage war termination. The United States had more than its share of poorly terminated conflicts. This paper discusses answers to a three part question concerning war termination: do war termination principles differ with the nature of the war, if so, should operational commanders discriminate between conflict termination principles when exercising operational art, and is joint doctrine sufficient in providing guidance for conflict termination?

Classical theory of war termination and lessons learned from previous U.S. military operations indicate that principles of conflict termination do not differ with the nature of the war. Although the nature of the war drives the operational design that causes conflict termination, the operational commander can apply war termination principles to all types of war. Joint doctrine, specifically Joint Pub 3-0, is more than adequate in offering planning guidance to the joint force commander. Joint doctrine has incorporated lessons from past operations and conflict termination theory to provide thorough planning guidance.

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## WAR TERMINATION: DO PLANNING PRINCIPLES CHANGE WITH THE NATURE OF THE WAR?

### **INTRODUCTION**

There is an abundance of literature pertaining to war termination both from a theoretical and doctrinal perspective. Despite the volumes of research and literature belligerents still mismanage war termination. In discussing war and policy, Clausewitz talked about the importance of the nature of war:

The first, the supreme, the most far-reaching act of judgment that the statesman and commander have to make is to establish by that test the kind of war on which they are embarking; neither mistaking it for, nor trying to turn it into, something that is alien to its nature.<sup>1</sup>

Clausewitz also pointed out that war planning should incorporate and reconcile all aspects of the war with its aims:

No one starts a war—or rather, no one in his senses ought to do so—without first being clear in his mind what he intends to achieve by that war and how he intends to conduct it. The former is its political purpose; the latter its operational objective.<sup>2</sup>

Joint Pub 3-0, in discussing termination under operational art, establishes that the nature of the war drives war termination design.<sup>3</sup> This paper addresses war termination planning guidance and the nature of the war from the operational planner's perspective. More specifically, the paper attempts to answer the questions, do war termination principles differ with the nature of the war, if so, should operational commanders discriminate between conflict termination principles when exercising operational art, and is joint doctrine sufficient in providing conflict termination? To answer these questions, appropriate terms

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<sup>1</sup>Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, and trans. by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 88.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid, 579.

<sup>3</sup>Joint Publication 3-0, III-22.

need defining. The paper presents discussion of classical war termination theory followed by doctrinal guidance on the subject. Lastly, vignettes from wars with differing natures and conclusions are discussed.

## **TERMS AND DEFINITIONS**

To discuss war termination, certain terms should have common definition. The below defined terms apply to this paper.

**Nature of the War.** Nature of the war encompasses broad categories such as conventional, nuclear, insurgency, and coalition warfare. The term also refers to the war's duration and magnitude. It includes limited and unlimited warfare. Lastly, the nature of the war considers interest and value based wars. The type of war, how the belligerents fight the war, and the purpose for which the war is fought defines the nature of the war.

**End State.** An end state is a clearly described set of conditions that achieve strategic objectives. The use of all instruments of national power in achieving the end state is relative to the nature of the conflict.<sup>4</sup>

**Conflict Termination/War Termination.** Some authors separate these two terms by scope: conflict termination used narrowly meaning the end of military hostilities and war termination used broadly encompassing the ending of armed conflict and the post hostilities involved in winning the peace. A Clausewitzian definition of war/conflict termination looks at the objective of the war as always being military-political and the means of resolving the conflict moves on a continuum from the more political through the more military back to the more

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<sup>4</sup>Joint Pub 3-0, III-2

political.<sup>5</sup> In this paper, war/conflict termination are interchangeable and have the following definition:

Conflict termination is the process leading to the resolution of a conflict and the basis for mutual acceptance of interests and objectives to ensure lasting settlement conditions. Conflict termination not only includes the use of force but may involve all the instruments of power such as political, economic, and informational.<sup>6</sup>

A common base of terms makes classical conflict termination theory and military doctrine more coherent.

### **WAR TERMINATION: CLASSICAL RESEARCH AND THEORY**

Classical Research. The economic perspective was popular between the two world wars. This perspective especially grew in popularity after World War I due to the belief that the economic consequences of the Versailles Treaty prevented stability in Europe and contributed to the start of World War II. The economic perspective takes a very broad approach to war termination. It considers the economic impact on decisions to terminate war including post-war employment, free trade, reparations and financial problems of reconstruction. The economic perspective also involves the inducement of economic incentives to terminate the conflict. The United States attempted to use economic incentives to resolve the Vietnam War and the Middle East Peace problem. The U.S. offers economic and military aid to both Israel and the Arabs to cease conflict.<sup>7</sup> The economic perspective has more utility in conflict resolution as

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<sup>5</sup>John T. Fishel, The Fog of Peace: Planning and Executing the Restoration of Panama, (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College. Strategic Studies Institute, 1992), 65

<sup>6</sup>Susan E. Strednansky, Balancing the Trinity: The Fine Art of Conflict Termination, (Maxwell AFB, ALA: U.S. Air University. School of Advanced Airpower Studies, 1996), 4

<sup>7</sup>Michael I. Handel, War Termination: A Critical Survey, (Jerusalem: Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Leonard Davis Institute for International Relations, 1978) p.13

opposed to conflict termination. It also seems to be a more appropriate construct for the strategist to consider than for the operational commander.

Other areas of war termination research are: international law, diplomatic history, and international relations. The international law perspective looks at the formal and legal aspects of war termination. This approach explores the terms of cease fires, truce agreements, legal position of belligerents, and methods of enforcing peace terms. Diplomatic history research into war termination includes detailed analyses of the complete process of war resolution. This area neglects theoretical and comparative research for the more favorable in-depth, historical case study.<sup>8</sup> Both international law and diplomatic history research are rich in empirical data but lack the theoretical constructs that are useful for the operational commander. The most promising area of study for war termination is in international relations. International relations offer two theories of war termination that are of greater value to the operator practicing operational art: non-rational and rational models.

Non-Rational Model. The non-rational model considers the role of three main actors in war termination: individuals (usually political and military leaders); bureaucracies; and domestic factors. The non-rational model theory argues that the actors pursue their interest and compete in the decisions and policy formation for conflict termination. National objectives seem unclear and the war serves many purposes. Ikle , in his book Every War Must End, describes this aspect of the theory:

...war serves many purposes, and these purposes are not only accomplished as the fighting ends but are also realized by the war effort itself and the preparations for it. Naturally, those involved will

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid, P. 13-15

then focus most of their attention on the means, rather than on how the over-all effort will accomplish some ultimate national ends.<sup>9</sup>

From their perspective these actors may pursue war termination very rationally. When viewing their efforts as a whole, contradictions may become visible and irrational behavior seems evident to the outside observer. Pursuit of conflict termination seems irrational by the belligerent. Hitler, in World War II, is an extreme example of individual, non-rational behavior in conflict termination. One could argue that Germany lost the war long before the war concluded but Hitler's irrationality kept the fighting ongoing until his suicide. The lack of United States public support for the war in Vietnam serves as a good example of a domestic influence to terminate that conflict. One could have interpreted the behavior of the United States government, its public, and its military towards Vietnam as very irrational.

Handel states one effect that the non-rational model may have on the operational commander: "These non-rational elements undermine and limit our possibility to understand or make predictions about the termination of war."<sup>10</sup> On the other hand, if the operational commander understands the non-rational model, his understanding may explain what might be considered irrational behavior of a belligerent towards conflict termination and, consequently, lead to better sequenced operations. The model does not offer any direct distinction in war termination concerning the nature of the war. Generally, one can apply the model to all types of wars.

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<sup>9</sup>Fred C. Ikle, Every War Must End (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971),p.14

<sup>10</sup>Handel, p.43

Rational Model. Clausewitz provided the basis for the rational model in his book On War with the following statement:

Still more general in its influence on the resolution to peace is the consideration of the expenditure of force already made, and further required. As war is no act of blind passion, but is dominated by the political object, therefore the value of that object determines the measure of sacrifices by which it is to be purchased. This will be the case, not only as regards extent, but also as regards duration. As soon, therefore, as the required outlay becomes so great as that the political object is no longer equal in value, the object must be given up, and peace will be the result.

We see, therefore, that in wars where one side cannot completely disarm the other, the motives to peace on both sides will rise and fall on each side according to the probability of future success and the required outlay. If these motives were equally strong on both sides, they would meet in the center of their political differences.<sup>11</sup>

A summary of the rational model follows:

1. Both sides or belligerents are in pursuit of national aims.
2. Each belligerent's war effort (mobilization and fighting) serves the attainment of the national aim.
3. Each belligerent's national aims are continuously pursued throughout the fighting although the aims might be modified due to adversities during the war.
4. Each belligerent's decision to continue fighting or terminate the conflict is the result of a rational calculation of the cost of the means to attain the ends.<sup>12</sup>

The calculation consists of estimating the kind of attainable peace terms with or without further fighting, how the military situation would be strengthened or weakened, and how it effects the outcome with further fighting.

This model implies that states in wars are uniactors and serve as the central decision makers. It implies also that both belligerents understand the

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<sup>11</sup>Clausewitz, p125

<sup>12</sup>Ikle, pp14-15

value of the means and ends of the war and possess the knowledge to calculate the relative power and value of the other side's means and ends. Lastly, the model implies that both sides can calculate the cost involved in attaining the ends. Criticism to this model alleges that belligerents rarely make decisions as uniactors. Often, the decision making process involves the elements of the non-rational model. Another criticism is that belligerents seldom have the requisite information to make rational decisions concerning their adversary. Lastly, it is very difficult to compare the cost of the war with the benefits of attaining its objectives. There seem to be few common denominators in this type of cost/benefit analysis.<sup>13</sup> The reality of conflict termination is that most belligerents apply a synthesis of both the non-rational and rational models. Individual, bureaucratic, and domestic influences may cloud a leader's pursuit of national aims.<sup>14</sup> Consequently, both political and military leaders on opposing sides in a war may have differing perceptions of the situation. The perception may differ relative to your side and to that of the enemy.

The study of war termination is more an art than a science and the operational commander is more an artist than a scientist. Therefore, the operational commander through understanding the rational model may be in a better position to achieve national aims through operational design. This model helps the operational commander understand why aims may not always be clear, but emphasizes the importance of seeking clarification. Analysis of the model brings out its inherent shortcomings; and, thereby pushes the operational commander to rely more heavily on his planning process to overcome these theoretical shortcomings. Use of the above theoretical models aid the operational commander in identifying potential problems and solutions to conflict termination.

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<sup>13</sup>Handel, pp 29-31

<sup>14</sup>Ikle, p16

Scholarly research and theory provide the operational commander with broad concepts and constructs in order to think about war termination. Another tool to aid the commander with conflict termination is military doctrine. A review of joint and service doctrine pertaining to war termination follows.

### **WAR TERMINATION: MILITARY DOCTRINE**

Joint Doctrine. Joint Pub 3-0, Doctrine for Joint Operations, is the principal document that discusses joint doctrine for war termination. Joint doctrine places responsibility for how an operation terminates with the National Command Authorities. It also makes the Joint Force Commander (JFC) responsible for knowing NCA intentions before committing forces and cautions him to consider conflict termination at the onset of planning and refine it throughout the conflict. The thesis of connecting the strategic goal with conflict termination dictates that the JFC be dominant in the final stages of the conflict possessing sufficient leverage over the enemy to impose an enduring solution. A critical part of this connection is a clearly defined, end state. In doing so, doctrine guides planners to consider what is necessary to terminate armed conflict, and postconflict activities. The how and when to terminate the conflict involves operational art.<sup>15</sup>

Operational Art. The first reference Joint Pub 3-0 makes concerning war termination comes under “arranging operations.” It advises the JFC to arrange operations simultaneously and sequentially to achieve the desired end state conditions quickly and at the least cost in personnel and other resources. Under the “phases” section of operational art in the follow-through phase, doctrine advises the JFC “...to continuously assess the impact of current operations during hostilities on the termination objectives. The outcome of military operations

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<sup>15</sup>Joint Pub 3-0, pI-8, I-9.

should not conflict with the long-term solution to the crisis.<sup>16</sup> When doctrine addresses the arranging of operations, the doctrinal authors seem to borrow from the rational model of war termination.

During the posthostilities and redeployment phase, doctrine dictates that the JFC may retain responsibility for posthostility operations or he may transfer control of the situation to some other authority. Posthostility operations require early identification and planning of mission needs.<sup>17</sup>

Under operational art, doctrine makes the connection between conflict termination and the nature of the war:

In war, termination design is driven in part by the nature of the war itself. Wars over territorial disputes or economic advantage tend to be interest-based and lend themselves to negotiation, persuasion, and coercion. Wars fought in the name of ideology, ethnicity, or religious or cultural primacy tend to be value-based and reflect demands that are seldom negotiable. Often, wars are a result of both value and interest-based differences.<sup>18</sup>

One could argue that DESERT STORM was more of an interest-based war and lent itself more to negotiation, persuasion, and coercion in the termination phase. Vietnam, on the other hand, was more a value-based war and the negotiations and conflict termination design did not endure.

Joint Pub 3-0 ends the discussion of termination pertaining to the nature of the war with the following wisdom:

- Commanders strive to end combat operations in terms favorable to the U.S. and its allies or coalition partners.
- Gain leverage over the enemy in the final stages of combat in order to impose your will on him.

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<sup>16</sup>Joint Pub 3-0, p III-19

<sup>17</sup>Ibid, p III-19

<sup>18</sup>Ibid, p III-22

- A hasty or ill-designed end to the operation may bring with it the possibility that related disputes will arise, leading to further conflict.
- Successful wars achieve political aims that endure.<sup>19</sup>

The very last mention of war termination in Joint Pub 3-0 comes in Appendix B, the estimate process, under mission analysis. The commander analyzes the long and short term objectives for conflict termination and considers the military objectives that achieve the political aims regardless of an imposed or negotiated conflict termination.<sup>20</sup> Generally, joint doctrine makes clear its main points concerning war termination. Doctrine does recognize the importance of the nature of the war and its role in war termination. The guidance in this respect is applicable to all wars. Besides, to get more specific would be a departure from doctrine and an entrance into the commander's realm of prerogative.

Service Doctrine. Service doctrine addresses conflict termination broadly offering considerably less information on the subject as compared to joint doctrine. FM 100-5 Operations mentions some of the same themes as Joint Pub 3-0. For example, recognition of the political aims in conflict termination, the nature of the conflict and its termination, knowing when and how ending the conflict contributes to policy goals, and the importance of posthostilities are included.<sup>21</sup> FMFM 1-1 Campaigning stresses the importance of having a clear end state and sequencing operations to achieve policy goals at conflict termination.<sup>22</sup> Neither of the service doctrine manuals attempt to integrate conflict termination in operational art. Joint doctrine is better from an integration perspective.

## CONFLICTS AND LESSONS

<sup>19</sup>Joint Pub 3-0, ppIII-22-23

<sup>20</sup>Ibid, B-1

<sup>21</sup>FM 100-5 Operations, p6-23

<sup>22</sup>FMFM 1-1 Campaigning, pp 33-35

Operations JUST CAUSE and PROMOTE LIBERTY in Panama in 1990 are examples of conventional war intertwined with military operations other than war (MOOTW) or stated differently, conventional conflict with termination considerations followed by posthostility operations. There were four strategic objectives: protect American lives; ensure the implementation of the Panama Canal Treaties; restore Panamanian democracy; and bring Manuel Noriega to justice. The combat plan, Blue Spoon, was associated with Operation JUST CAUSE. OPLAN Blind Logic was the associated plan for Operation PROMOTE LIBERTY, the restoration of democracy to Panama (posthostility operations).

Fishel, in his book The Fog Of Peace, argues that Operation JUST CAUSE went like clockwork. Both JUST CAUSE and PROMOTE LIBERTY were operational successes but strategically ambiguous.<sup>23</sup> The problems started with the planning phases, but manifested itself in the looting of Panama and setting the ground work for the follow-on Operation PROMOTE LIBERTY (civil-military operations). Fishel's analysis identified several problems and lessons learned for the operational commander:

- There is an absolute requirement to articulate political-military strategic objectives in terms of **clearly defined end-states** (emphasis added)
- Unity of effort in the interagency environment (posthostilities) can only be achieved if all critical government agencies are included in the contingency planning process.
- A campaign plan to link the strategic and operational level is necessary.<sup>24</sup>

Fishel provided a similar analysis of war termination in DESERT STORM. In this conflict, he again points out the need for clearly defined end-states. U.S. Central

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<sup>23</sup>Fishel, The Fog Of Peace, p.vii

<sup>24</sup>Ibid, p.65-67

Command (CENTCOM) did a good job of defining an end-state from the strategic objectives. The end-state became fuzzy when U.S. Presidential rhetoric called for the removal of Saddam Hussein from power. Because of the confused U.S. policy, CENTCOM'S end-state became one of many competing visions of the future in the area. The confusion in U.S. policy led to undesired and unanticipated outcomes: Shiite revolt in southern Iraq and the Kurdish refugee situation.

The Kuwait Task Force (KTF) responsible for the restoration of Kuwait (posthostility operations) also experienced end-state clarity problems besides planning difficulties with conflict termination. Planning for the restoration of Kuwait was done by the KTF in Washington D.C., not under the supervision of CINCCENT. Once in the theater, the KTF did come under the CINC, but the efforts of both staffs were not coordinated and at times contradictory. Additionally, the military planners did not incorporate in their end-state a U.S. Government objective to move the Kuwaiti Government to a more democratic mode. This led to a disconnect in policy and strategy between the military and civilian agencies involved in the restoration of Kuwait. One might argue the disconnect resulted in a lesser degree of policy success.<sup>25</sup> Fishel's study of DESERT STORM'S conflict termination reveals several lessons for the operational commander: first, clearly define strategic objectives and link them through operations to an end-state; second, plan for conflict termination early on; third, seek national unity of effort in the planning and execution of conflict termination especially during posthostilities; and fourth, synchronize and

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<sup>25</sup>John T. Fishel, *Liberation, Occupation, and Rescue: War Termination and Desert Storm*. (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College. Strategic Studies Institute, 1992), pp60-63.

coordinate posthostility operations between military organizations and civilian agencies.<sup>26</sup>

Vietnam and Korea were both limited wars fought with limited means. Some have argued that Vietnam was a conventional and a counterinsurgency war consequently making it more difficult to understand its nature and thereby complicating its prosecution. That conflict termination of both wars was unfavorable to the United States is undeniable. The U.S. failed in their policy to maintain an independent South Vietnam; today, over decades later, U.S. troops remain deployed to guarantee South Korean independence. I would argue that the U.S. had unfavorable conflict termination in both wars because it did not achieve leverage over its enemies. Two arguments for U.S. failure in Vietnam are: that Vietnam was an insurgency and the American military failed to identify and win the loyalty of the South Vietnamese people as the center of gravity; or, that because of limited means and constraints imposed against the American military it did not attack the enemy's center of gravity in North Vietnam sufficiently (limited bombing, no invasion). Regardless of the argument to which one subscribes, the fact remains that the U.S. Government neither gained leverage over the Vietcong through the Vietnamese people nor did the U.S. Government achieve leverage over the North Vietnamese Government, hence poor conflict termination. In Korea, we reduced our leverage over North Korea by restricting offensive operations to the 38th parallel. In doing so, the U.S. diminished its threat to North Korea. In both of these examples of limited war, leverage was vital to the negotiations and conflict termination. In both cases, the U.S. lacked the requisite leverage over its adversary.

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<sup>26</sup>Ibid, pp60-69.

## **CONCLUSIONS.**

To conclude this paper, answers to the three part thesis question are provided. First, my research indicates that conflict termination principles do not differ with the nature of the war. War termination principles are consistent across the spectrum of conflict. Second, the operational commander can apply the same conflict termination principles to conventional limited wars, unlimited wars, insurgencies, value-based, or interest-based wars. The commander does not have to discriminate between conflict termination principles according to the nature of the war; but, how he applies those principles in his operational design will differ from one war to another. Further, there are six conflict termination principles when applied to operational art that enhance the chances of successful war termination:

1. Articulate political/military strategic objectives in terms of clearly defined end states.
2. Apply National Unity of effort including critical government agencies in the conflict termination planning process.
3. Plan for conflict termination at the beginning of the planning process.
4. Link the strategic and operational goals to accommodate conflict termination through operational design(use of sequencing, branches, and sequels).
5. Synchronize and coordinate posthostility operations between military organizations and civilian agencies.
6. Achieve leverage over the enemy.

Research also indicates that of all the conflict termination principles, a clearly defined end state and achieving leverage over the enemy are the most important. Without these two important principles one could argue there is no successful conflict termination. The third and final answer to the thesis question is that Joint

Pub 3-0 is more than adequate in providing joint doctrine concerning war termination. There seems to have been an effort to include lessons from conflict termination in previous operations and theoretical thought on war termination in the doctrinal guidance.

Some argue there is a weakness in doctrinal guidance pertaining to war termination and coalition warfare: that the principles of war termination do not meet the rigors of coalition cohesion. In coalition warfare, doctrine advises the JFC to understand the coalition partners' objectives and end state. The more partners involved in the conflict the more complicated the termination becomes. The war termination principles discussed above still apply to coalition warfare. The complexity of coalition warfare means that the operational commander has to work harder at not only gaining leverage over his enemy but also gaining leverage over his allies to ensure favorable U.S. and successful coalition war termination.

War termination planning principles do not change with the nature of the war. The operational commander changes his operational design to suit the nature of the war but the conflict termination planning principles remain the same.

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